

**Amendments to the Drawings:**

The attached formal drawings replace the originally filed facsimile copy of the drawings. The correction to Fig. 6, as presented in the March 17, 2005 Amendment, is reflected in the formal drawings.

Attachment: Formal Drawings

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3-17, 20 and 21 are pending in this application. Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claim 16 is allowed, and claims 4, 5, 10, 13, 14 and 19 contain allowable subject matter.

By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in claim 19 and in intervening claim 18. Claims 2, 18 and 19 are canceled.

Claims 20 and 21 are added to recite additional features disclosed in the specification at, for example, page 35, lines 16-18.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiner Grainger for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Luo, during the August 18, 2006 telephone interview. The substance of the interview is incorporated in the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 6-9, 11, 12, 15, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,006,050 to Watanabe et al. ("Watanabe") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,040,031 to Hayashi. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in claim 19. Claims 2, 18 and 19 are canceled. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 6-9, 11, 12, 15, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested..

Claims 20 and 21 are believed to be patentable over the applied references. For example, in Watanabe (col. 10, lines 8-31), an average output value Vt1 is obtained by sampling and averaging a plurality of output value data Vt and is stored in an internal memory. The average output value Vt1 is updated every image forming operation for each transfer sheet. Also, an average output value Vt2 is obtained by sampling a plurality of output value data Vt and averaging the data. The average output value Vt2 is then compared to the average output value Vt1.

On the other hand, in the present application, the memory stores "the remaining toner status that was last detected during the image forming operation that was performed just prior to executing the current warm-up operation" (page 35, lines 16-18). During the warm-up operation, the controller compares the detected remaining developer amount with "the remaining toner status that was last detected during the image forming operation that was performed just prior to executing the current warm-up operation" stored in the memory. In other words, the controller compares two amounts obtained for "essentially the same amount of toner" (page 35, lines 21). Accordingly, it is possible to obtain more accurate results than the control process of Watanabe which compares two average values  $Vt_1$  and  $Vt_2$ .

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-17, 20 and 21 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff  
Registration No. 27,075

Gang Luo  
Registration No. 50,559

JAO:GXL/sqb

Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time  
Formal Drawings

Date: August 24, 2006

**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 19928**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

<p><b>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION</b> Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
---